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ABSTRACT

Four surveys are described which gauged student opinion concerning state, national, and international events as well as responses relevant to curriculum structure and subject matter knowledge. The surveys, conducted from 1975 through 1978, elicited responses from approximately 400 to approximately 850 New Hampshire public high school students. In response to school related questions, students supported mandatory mastery of basic skills and opposed social promotion. They also opposed ending compulsory attendance at age 14 and felt that neither the number of courses nor the number of classes should be reduced. However, they felt that job skills should be learned in apprentice situations rather than in the schools. Regarding subject areas, many students felt that too little instruction is given about the actual workings of government, about the basic values and ideals of our society, and about current issues. Also, they felt that too little attention is devoted to the development of interpersonal skills. They expressed a desire for more assistance in consumer economics and in career choice. Student emphases on material acquisition as the "good life" and on television viewing suggest that schools may be remiss in teaching values and critical thinking skills. In answering factual questions, students indicated more knowledge about national and international facts than about their own state. Finally, suggestions are given for dealing with American politics. Survey questions and the distribution of responses are included. (KC)

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Some N. H. Public High School Student Opinions Revealed

Occasional Paper No. 4

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

by

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Department of Education
University of New Hampshire

March 5, 1979

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SOME NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT OPINIONS REVEALED

"I don't think my school courses have stressed enough about how to establish and maintain a successful marriage."

"I think students should be required to complete successfully basic skills and knowledge type courses before being able to take electives in English and Social Studies."

"I think politicians are generally crooks, liars, cheats, dishonest, greedy and/or corrupt."

Student thoughts and feelings such as these are too little heard and attended to by segments of adult society which make decisions which affect the present and the future world of students: teachers and school administrators, newspaper editors, and politicians. It is uncertain whether or not decisions made by these segments of the adult population would be altered were student opinion known. It is most certain that these decision makers cannot adjust to student opinion if that opinion is not known.

In an effort to ascertain student opinion and make it known to politicians, editors, administrators, teachers, educators, and future teachers, I have since 1975 conducted four surveys of New Hampshire public high school student opinion about state, national, and international events, conditions, and problems and about school matters which were important at the time of the survey or which were of personal interest to me. A few factual items have been included to give me a sense of how knowledgeable students are about certain things in the content area of my prime interest

- social studies.

Each survey included students from large and small high schools in each of five geographic areas of the state: Seacoast, Merrimack Valley, Southwest, Lakes, and North Country. Large schools received more survey questionnaires than did small schools. After one use of a four option Likert response, I have settled upon a two option response: "I tend to AGREE" and "I tend to DISAGREE". Some respondents invariably opted for a third option by not responding at all.

TABLE 1

Number of Respondents in Each Survey

	Total	Female	Male	Large Schools	Small Schools
1975 (February)	396	194	202	318	78
1976 (January)	852	374	478	650	202
1977 (May)	660	322	338	501	159
1978 (February)	445	231	214	327	118

SCHOOL RELATED QUESTIONS

In 1978, students were provided with eight briefly described suggestions which have been proposed for the improvement of public schools grades 1 - 12. Respondents were asked to indicate whether each suggestion would be "likely to IMPROVE" schools or "likely to WEAKEN" schools.

TABLE II

Responses to Items Describing Suggestions for Improving Public Schools

(Responses expressed in percentages with "No Response" omitted)

Likely to IMPROVE	Likely to WEAKEN	
76	23	Require students to successfully complete basic skill and knowledge focused courses in English and social studies in order to be eligible to take elective courses in those fields.
71	28	Learn job skills by being apprenticed to businessmen or craftsmen rather than in school shops, laboratories, or classrooms.
67	33	No one will be promoted to the next grade level unless he or she is able to read, write, calculate, and think at the ability level expected for the next grade (the ability level to be determined by state officials or the the local school board).
52	47	Require students to do more work and higher quality work in order to get a passing, C, B, or A course grade.
48	52	Permit a student to receive a high school diploma at the age of 16 if the student can pass a high school equivalency test (whether or not he has finished all the required courses of his/her school.
33	67	Tighten rules for student behavior while in school or on school grounds (Examples: can't wear a hat in school, can't chew gum in school, can't talk in the library, etc..)
30	69	Permit high school students who must or want to work to take only 2 or 3 courses each semester and graduate in 5, 6, or 7 years.
18	82	Lower to 14 the age at which a student could decide to stop attending school.

By a two-to-one margin, respondents supported two suggestions which would make school practices more rigorous. They came down strong on the side of basic skills and a school regulation which would demand student mastery of basic skills before being permitted to move on to enrollment in elective, more free wheeling, open type courses. They also opposed what in essence amounts to social promotion. They felt that a student should have acquired the learning skills needed to succeed in the next higher grade before being promoted to that grade.

With similar strength of conviction, students rejected two suggestions which would ease certain school conditions. They violently opposed giving students the option of ending school attendance at the age of fourteen. They did not feel that schools should reduce the number of courses a student must take and the number of class periods a student must be in school each day.

These four responses suggest that students want schools to be more demanding of them, that they recognize lenient school practices as doing them a disservice, that they feel their inadequacy in dealing with problems which demand quick and accurate use of basic skills, and, perhaps, that there is a desire to have schools impose academic discipline upon them because they know they lack the self discipline demanded in getting the most out of lenient schools.

In expressing a strong opinion that job skills should be learned in an apprenticeship situation rather than in school shops, laboratories, or classrooms, respondents have put themselves at odds with education decision makers of the state who strongly support area vocational-technical high schools. Evidently, learning in a school setting seems unrelated to the real world of work no matter how well equiped the school may be and how knowledgeable and able are its teachers. "We want to learn real world skills in the real

world" respondents seem to be saying. Presumably they would want a full work day experience under the aegis of a school for which credit towards graduation would be granted. Respondents seem to reject a partial school day work release apprenticeship program in strongly opposing the suggestion that students be permitted to take only two or thtee courses each semester and prolong high school to 5,6,or 7 years. The survey did not elicit from respondents suggestions for how to implement on a massive scale an apprenticeship program which some schools currently approximate in cooperative education, work study, and career exploration programs of small size.

Respondents from large schools supported the apprenticeship approach with less zeal (66% favoring it) than did those from small schools (85% favoring it) - perhaps because large schools tend to have better shop and laboratory facilities than do small schools.

In 1977, students were provided with ten brief descriptions of content areas which naturally fall to the field of social studies. Five descriptions were of subject matter normally covered in existing social studies offerings - facts and issues focusing upon government and history. Five descriptions were of content areas which the investigator has observed to be infrequently included or included in electives in which but a small portion of the student body enrolls - human relations, family, consumer economics, and careers. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt their school had given "TOO MUCH", about the "RIGHT AMOUNT", or "TOO LITTLE" attention to the teaching of each of the ten content areas described.

TABLE III

Responses to Items Describing Content Areas

(Responses expressed in percentages with "No Response" omitted)

TOO MUCH	RIGHT AMOUNT	TOO LITTLE	
33	56	10	Who have been the most important persons in our history and why they were important
17	51	30	What are the different sides of current economic, social, or political issues
13	64	22	Changes of the last two centuries that have changed our society greatly
12	53	33	How our local, state, and national governments are organized and how they work
10	56	33	What are the basic ideas and values upon which our American society is based
6	23	69	How to establish and maintain a successful marriage
5	32	61	Understanding why people behave as they do and how to get along with different kinds of people
5	39	55	How to care for and raise children
4	37	58	How to make the best purchases of products or services
3	41	55	How to choose and prepare for a career

More than half of the respondents felt that the "RIGHT AMOUNT" of attention was being given to the five content areas the investigator felt are in the typical social studies curriculum. There was a call for some readjustment in the focus of history and government courses, for one in three respondents felt that " TOO LITTLE" attention had been given to how government at various levels actually works, the basic ideas and values upon which our society is founded, and current issues of import.

A majority of respondents felt that "TOO LITTLE" attention had been given to the five areas the investigator felt are frequently neglected. Perhaps social studies teachers and educators need to reassess what is basic in the social studies in this time of Back-to-Basics. The content suggestions for which "TOO LITTLE" responses dominated suggest that very basic to the field of social studies is the broad area of human relations - from the very personal relationships pf husband-wife- progeny to those of general social interactions among friends, colleagues, and new acquaintances. The study of men, events, and institutions remote from students in time, place, and everyday participation seems valuable but insufficient content for the social studies. If interpersonal relationships are as important as the survey responses suggest, maybe they should be required study for all high school students and included among the competencies to which schools strive to lead students and of which they will seek evidence in developing their assessment instruments.

In areas more concrete than those of interpersonal relationships, respondents expressed the desire for more knowledge and skills in consumer economics and more assistance in preparing to choose a career. Whether or not the content areas of interpersonal relationships, consumer economics,

and career exploration are offered in the social studies curriculum (which seldom includes them) or in home economics, mathematics, or vocational courses (which usually offer them if offered at all) is immaterial. Students do seem to want greater opportunity to study these areas. That more do not study them may stem from the areas not being offered, from tracking systems which close the areas to some students, from stigmas which students associate with departments offering the courses, or from simple inadequate teaching of the areas.

In 1976, students were asked: "Which one of the following fields of study do you feel will help you most to live a good adult life?"[1]

TABLE V

Responses to the Item about Fields of Study and the Adult Good Life

(Responses expressed in percentages with "No Response" omitted)

Practical Arts	43
Social Studies	14
English	12
Science	8
Physical Education	8
Mathematics	6
Fine Arts	4
Forlegn Language	2

[1]A somewhat more extended discussion of this was published in Phi Delta Kappan, September 1977, pp. 67-69.

Overwhelming stress of the contributions of the practical arts to the good adult life suggests that students emphasize the career and the do-it-yourself materialistic aspects of the good life. If that be so, school people might consider whether or not the concept of the good life is sufficiently attended to in school, whether teachers of the other fields of study focus upon ("sell" might be a more candid term) the life long pleasure and applicabilities their fields give to those who master and grow to love them.

In 1976, students were also asked: "What is your one most important source of information and opinion about current national and international problems and events?"[2]

TABLE V

Responses to the Item about Main Source of Information

(Responses expressed in percentages with "No Response" omitted)

Television	45
Newspaper	12
School/Teachers	9
Family	9
Magazines	6
Friends	3
Uninterested in acquiring this type of information	

[2]David D. Graves, "Student Opinions: Cause for Reflection", Phi Delta Kappan, September 1977, pp. 68 - 69.

Student response to this question reinforces recent research about the role of television in young people's lives and poses a simple but basic question for educators: "Are schools doing enough to help students to develop skills and attitudes to cope effectively with this prominent influence over their lives?". Should schools be doing more to help students be more selective and discerning when using leisure time to view "happy hour" programs? Should students be helped to understand the limitations of television news programs and the relative advantages and disadvantages of television, newspaper, and news magazine? In short, should television and other mass media be objects of concentrated study for all or most students?

FACT QUESTIONS

Relative few fact questions have been included in my surveys- an area well covered by national and state assessment instruments and by standardized tests. Student responses to fact questions evoked one observation: students responded with a higher degree of correctness to questions about national and international facts than to those about the state of New Hampshire. This suggests that schools have not yet implemented well the RSA 189:11 mandate to teach New Hampshire history and government. It will be interesting to see if the fall 1978 state assessment test confirms this conjecture. The two 1978 survey items which dwelt upon New Hampshire were difficult ones, in part because responses may have been based more upon emotion induced by political slogans and news flashes than upon reflection upon the survey statement. Sixty-one percent correctly agreed that "The state of New Hampshire pays for less than 1/5 the expense of educating public school students through grade twelve" but only 40 percent correctly agreed that "The state of New Hampshire taxes income from stock dividends and from interest from deposits in banks outside of New Hampshire."

One open ended opinion question was asked in both 1975 and 1976: What one word describes best the typical American politician? In both years, words which described politicians unfavorably outnumbered those which described them favorably by more than four to one. "Crook", "dishonest", "liar" and "greedy" were most frequently written in along with synonyms for them as well as other unflattering descriptors.

Does it matter that students have such a jaded view of American politicians? Does the school care whether students have such a negative concept? Should the school care? Is the school in any way responsible for this negative impression? My guess is that the answer to these four questions is "Yes" in varying degrees of urgency.

"Yes" because distrust of those who are the core of our political decision making leads to disillusionmemt with the political system and, ultimately, to weakening of that system. "Yes", for if students enter their adult world cynically pessimistic about our nation's political system their behavior will weaken that system by voter apathy, milking the system for one's own benefit, and distrust of others in general, not just politicians. "Yes", the school should care, not because distrust might eventually lead voters to reduce school budgets, but because the school as an institution has a responsibility to maintain and improve society and its institutions.

In many classrooms, discussion of current events is superficial and based upon news distributed by the daily mass media - principally television and newspaper - much of which stresses investigative reporting without in depth reportage of the bland, necessary, and, perhaps, positive aspects of political decisions and their processes. Dipping into the public till is sensational stuff for both the media and student opining but is only one

narrow aspect of our political system. Do teachers delve into the nitty-gritty of political processes as often and as enthusiastically as into sensational actions?

In truth, the school plays a weak terciary role in shaping student political opinion. The foremost role is played by the politicians whose actions provide the raw case studies from which students form judgments about politicians and our political system. However, students receive these case studies from the media which interpret and serve them to the public in their own media-limited way. The school, largely limited materials made available by the media, cannot represent contemporary politicians in a virginal white ideal model for such a model would prove to be straw to those with but a slight knowledge about day-to-day political events. Therefore, the school must adopt oblique and supplementary approaches.

One oblique approach is to develop an image of what our society could be politically, socially, and economically. To accomplish this, students would need to acquire firm understanding of the concept and role of an ideal and use this concept not to put down present individuals and systems, but to strive to eliminate imperfections in what we now have. This somewhat utopian image of our society should evolve most fully from social studies, but evidently does not now - not in a believable and useful form.

A supplementary approach is to deal with aspects of the political system and processes which the media overlooks in its drive to present what is attention getting, current, and fast moving. Schools can give students understanding of how politicians must function in order to be successful in accomplishing their legislative goals - functions which are hidden from public view. Log rolling is necessary and can be engaged in without selling one's soul or constituency. Compromise is necessary. Losing today to win tomorrow is necessary. Responding to constituent pressure is necessary.

Deviation from stated goals is necessary and reasonable because of information made available to the politician of which the general public is not informed : simply because of the mass of dull but essential data which is needed by politicians to make informed political decisions. In short, the content of government and history courses needs to be adjusted to provide students with understandings of the day-to-day operating procedures and pressures of our political system as well as skills with which to injest and interpret what the media presents to the public as the story of today's political scene.

What the school can do might be minimal. That it should try to do it is an apriori responsibility which every school person accepts when entering the profession

Student opinion heard and shared. Small though the sample of items and number of respondents may have been, food for thought has been provided for him who conducted the surveys, food for thought which might be well for school administrators and teachers to chew upon also. Having chewed, maybe changes will be contemplated in the goals, curriculum, and teaching strategies of the public high schools of the state of New Hampshire.

APPENDIX A

FEBRUARY 1975 SURVEY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT OPINION

Total Responses: 396 (194 female, 202 male - 318 large school, 78 small school)

NOTE: The figures below indicate the percentage of respondents who answered as shown. Where the percentages do not add up to 100%, the missing percentages indicate students who did not respond to the item.

SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	D	SD
Haldeman, Erlichman, Mitchell, and Mardian should not have to serve jail terms for their parts in Watergate if Richard Nixon does not have to serve a jail term for his part in Watergate.	17	41	26	15
Congress, in recent years, has been effective in dealing with the country's problems.	2	31	53	13
Democracy is not as strong in the USA as it used be.	17	49	28	6
President Ford could have selected a better Vice President than Nelson Rockefeller.	22	42	29	4
Louis Wyman really won the 1974 NH senatorial election.	8	30	33	23
Most politicians intend to keep the promises they make during their campaign.	2	22	46	29
The national government is better run than New Hampshire state government.	6	27	55	9
I am really interested in what decisions President Ford, Congress, and the Supreme Court make.	23	52	21	4
President Ford is doing a better job as president than did Richard Nixon.	7	33	41	15
Our country's main problems would be solved more quickly if the national government exerted fewer controls.	7	41	40	10

Right now, my political views are represented best by

the Democratic Party	the Republican Party	a third party
35	24	29

Write the ONE word which you feel describes best the typical American politician.

"crook"	15
"dishonest"	5
"liar"	5
words of negative connotation ---	66
words of positive connotation ---	11
words of neutral connotation ----	10

What two problems do you feel are most important for Congress and the President to deal with at this time?

inflation	38
economy	24
unemployment	18
energy	13
recession/ depression	13

APPENDIX B

JANUARY 1976 SURVEY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE PUBLIC
HIGH SCHOOL POLITICAL OPINION
(Conducted by Dr. David D. Draves)

TOTAL RESPONSE: 852 (Female: 374 Male: 478)

"Right now my political beliefs are represented most closely by

the Republican Party	the Democratic Party	Neither Major Party	No Response
150 (18%)	207 (24%)	466 (55%)	29 (3%)

Survey Statements	I tend to AGREE	I tend to DISAGREE
1. The New Hampshire state legislature should not pass a broad based income or sales tax.	82%	16%
2. The federal government spends too much money on social programs like education, welfare, care of the aged, medical assistance.	13%	85%
3. Congress is more at fault than is the President for the problems now facing the United States.	61%	35%
4. The State of New Hampshire spends too much money on social programs like education, welfare, care of the aged, medical assistance.	13%	84%
5. Congress should not pass a law which requires spending more money without including in the law the means to collect the additional money to be spent.	75%	22%
6. In the past ten years, life in the United States has been worsening	68%	31%
7. Congressmen and Senators more often vote for a bill because it will help influential supporters than because it is best for the country	70%	26%
8. A law should be passed which requires every gun in the United States to be registered by its owner	80%	19%
9. New Hampshire state government is run better than the national government	52%	43%
10. All New England states should hold their presidential primary elections on the same date	43%	54%
11. The people of the United States should cut down on what they consume in order to be able to give more aid to the people of the world's poorest nations .	37%	61%
12. President Ford did the right thing in granting Richard Nixon a pardon	43%	55%
13. Every American receives equal treatment when involved in a court case	21%	78%

APPENDIX C

1977 (MAY) SURVEY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT OPINION

Figures represent percentage of total survey population responding in the manner indicated

Total Responses - 660

OPINION STATEMENTS:

I tend to AGREE	DISAGREE	
69	31	President Carter is making a sincere effort to keep his campaign promises (Statement #10)
62	38	If the state government of New Hampshire needs more money, it should be raised by permitting state regulated gambling casinos rather than by a state income tax (Statement #6)
62	38	If a registered voter does not vote in a local, state, or national election for six consecutive years, that voter's registration should be suspended until he registers again (Statement #7)
58	42	Presidential campaigns are so long that the public loses interest in them before election day (Statement #3)
54	46	I would be willing to turn over to the federal government 1/3 of my yearly earnings in return for receiving free medical care and a guaranteed income for my whole life (Statement #9)
51	49	If the Soviet Union and the United States went to war right now, the Soviet Union would have superior military power (Statement #1)
50	50	Since it takes five or more pounds of grain to produce one pound of marketable beef, Americans should consume less beef and more grain foodstuffs (Statement #5)
48	52	The United States should build nuclear power plants even though there may be some danger involved (Statement #2)
29	71	Once elected to office, a politician cannot continue to be as honest as he or she was before being elected (Statement #8)
22	78	If the oil shortage becomes critical, the United States should take some Middle East oil fields by military conquest (Statement #4)

INFORMATIONAL STATEMENTS:

AGREE	DISAGREE	
88	12	The people of the United States consume more energy each year than do the people of all African nations combined (Statement #12)
87	13	No country in the world contributes a larger percentage of its total wealth to economic assistance for foreign nations than does the United States (Statement #13)
71	29	Newly born babies are more likely to live to the age of three if born in the United States than if born in any other country (Statement #14)
66	34	More than one out of every five dollars taken in by the typical store in my community is pure profit for the owner (Statement #11)

SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT: WHETHER EACH LISTED AREA HAS BEEN GIVEN TOO MUCH ATTENTION, ABOUT THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF ATTENTION, OR TOO LITTLE ATTENTION IN HIGH SCHOOL COURSES WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN

TOO MUCH	RIGHT AMOUNT	TOO LITTLE	(Note: Missing percentages are those of omitted or undecipherable responses)
33	56	10	Who have been the most important persons in our history and why they were important (Area E)
17	51	30	What are the different sides of current economic, social, or political issues (Area A)
13	64	22	Changes of the last two centuries that have changed our society greatly (Area I)
12	53	33	How our local, state, and national governments are organized and how they work (Area G)
10	56	33	What are the basic ideas and values upon which our American society is based (Area C)
6	23	69	How to establish and maintain a successful marriage (Area H)
5	32	61	Understanding why people behave as they do and how to get along with different kinds of people (Area F)
5	39	55	How to care for and raise children (Area B)
4	37	58	How to make the best purchases of products or services (Area J)
3	41	55	How to choose and to prepare for a career (Area D)

I AM ATTENDING THIS SCHOOL NOW MAINLY BECAUSE:

36%	I am planning to go to college.
23%	I want to develop job skills so I can get a decent job when I leave school.
20%	I will need a diploma to get a decent job when I graduate.
7%	I like to learn.
3%	The law says I must attend school.
3%	My parents insist that I attend school.
2%	There are not many full time jobs for me if I did not attend.
1%	My best friends attend school and I want to be around them.
5%	No response or an undecipherable response.

RESPONDENT CATEGORIES:

Female	- 322	Male	- 338
Large School	- 501	Small School	- 159

WIDEST VARIATIONS IN RESPONSES MADE BY DIFFERENT RESPONDENT CATEGORIES:

Opinion Statements

#6 If the state government of New Hampshire needs more money...
72% of male respondents agreed, 53% of female respondents agreed

#2 The United States should build nuclear power plants...
57% of male respondents agreed, 39% of female respondents agreed

#9 I would be willing to turn over to the United States government...
62% small school respondents agreed, 51% large school respondents agreed

Informational Statements

#13 No country in the world contributes a larger percentage of its total...
89% of large school respondents agreed, 78% of small school respondents agreed

#11 More than one out of every five dollars taken in by the typical...
74% of small school respondents agreed, 63% of large school respondents agreed

APPENDIX D

1978 SURVEY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT OPINION

Students responded the last two weeks of February

Total Responses: 445 (231 Female, 214 Male - 327 Large School, 118 Small School)

Note: The figures below indicate the percentage of respondents who answered as shown. Where the percentages do not add up to 100%, the missing percentages indicate the percentage of students who did not respond to the item.

ITEMS 1-12: OPINION Ranked from the widest difference of opinion to the narrowest.

Tend to AGREE	Tend to DISAGREE	
81	19	The state of New Hampshire should pay at least one half of the expense of educating public school students through grade 12. (1)
26	73	The United States will not face a serious energy shortage during the rest of this century. (10)
31	67	The United States should break formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan (Nationalist China) if it will help to establish formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (Communist China). (11)
65	35	Whenever possible, I and all Americans should buy products made in the United States rather than those made in foreign countries (6)
40	60	The federal government should not pay for abortions wanted by women too poor to pay for an abortion. (8)
41	57	Since the 1976 election, the New Hampshire state legislature has been more responsible than has the governor for the failure to get needed legislation passed. (2)
56	44	The state government of New Hampshire should seek to slow down the growth of population and industry in the state. (3)
55	44	President Carter has not been as good a president as I thought he would be. (7)
45	54	Congress should approve the Panama Canal Treaties. (4)
54	45	At this moment, inflation is a greater national problem than is unemployment. (5)
45	53	President Carter has been more responsible than has Congress for the failure to get needed legislation passed in 1977. (9)
51	49	Schooling beyond that of a high school diploma is necessary in order to attain a satisfactory income as an adult. (12)

ITEMS 13-19: FACT Ranked from widest difference of opinion to the narrowest

AGREE	DISAGREE	
91	9	If my income were to remain the same during a year of inflation, the effect would be that I would be able to buy less at the end of the year with each dollar than at the beginning of the year. (15)
83	16	The Pacific Ocean has a larger surface area than any other of the world's oceans. (17)
81	18	Over the past year, people and businesses of the United States have bought more from foreign countries than they have sold to foreign countries. (13)
20	78	The Panama Canal connects the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. (8)
71	29	Three nations (Russia, Canada, China) are larger in size than is the United States. (14)
61	36	The state of New Hampshire currently pays for less than 1/5 the expense of educating public school students through grade 12. (19)
40	58	The state of New Hampshire taxes income from stock dividends and from interests from deposits in banks outside of New Hampshire. (16)

ITEMS A-H: OPINION (WOULD THE SUGGESTED CHANGE IMPROVE OR WEAKEN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS GRADES 1-12)? Ranked from the most likely to improve to the least likely to improve American public schools.

IMPROVE	WEAKEN	
76	23	Require students to successfully complete basic skill and knowledge focused courses in English and social studies in order to be eligible to take elective courses in those fields. (G)
71	28	Learn job skills by being apprenticed to businessmen or craftsmen rather than in school shops, laboratories, or classrooms. (A)
67	33	No one will be promoted to the next grade level unless he or she is able to read, write, calculate, and think at the ability level expected for the next grade (the ability level to be determined by state officials or the local school board). (B)
52	47	Require students to do more work and higher quality work in order to get a passing, C, B, or A course grade. (F)
48	52	Permit a student to receive a high school diploma at the age of 16 if the students can pass a high school equivalency test (whether or not he has finished all the required courses of his/her school. (D)
33	67	Tighten rules for student behavior while in school or on school grounds (Examples: can't wear a hat in school, can't chew gum in school, can't talk in the library, etc...). (C)
30	69	Permit high school students who must or want to work to take only 2 or 3 courses each semester and graduate in 5, 6, or 7 years. (E)
18	82	Lower to 14 the age at which a student could decide to stop attending school. (H)

PRIOR OCCASIONAL PAPERS

Editor: Leo D. Geoffrion

1. Initial Reading Through Computer Animation

   by Leo D. Geoffrion and R. Daniel Bergeron, March, 1978.

2. Elementary School Science: Not a basic

   by Michael D. Andrew, May, 1978.

3. Six Approaches to Evaluation of Teaching: A Typology

   by Roland B. Kimball, November, 1978.